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ABSTRACT

Because the outcome of education should be independence as well as a sense of accomplishment in serving others, educational objectives should consist of a demonstration of competence, the application of learning, creative responses, and the ability of one learner to teach the other. Educators need to reinforce examples of the work ethic and emphasize the value of deferred gratification. Similarly, a service component should be included in high school graduation requirements. Students could perform such services as tutoring, acting as school hosts and peer counselors, contributing to school beautification, and participating in charity drives. Community projects could consist of entertaining the infirm, observing and interviewing adults engaged in service to the community, and studying the methods of service organizations. Service awards and a "service to school and community" component on report cards could enhance the concept of service. A service-oriented educational experience could make the difference in our national spirit, direction, ethics, and production. (LH)

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WANTED: A SERVICE COMPONENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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Our education profession has shifted its emphasis from the art and science of teaching to the learning process. It is not what we plan, not what we deliver that counts. We are interested in how we set the table, but the payoff is on what the student learns. Our shift has been to student outcomes.

We know we are teaching better than ever before. We have much better equipment. Our research back-up is more vast and sophisticated than ever. We work with large groups and small groups. We use volunteer aides and paraprofessionals. We have diagnostic instruments and great banks of lesson activities to meet prescriptions.

We have refined our compensatory education programs. Our special education offerings are greater than ever, especially now with the infusion of federal funds from Public Law 92-142. We have specialists working in the fields of bilingual education, education for the mentally able, alternative programs at all levels, and, here in California, school improvement programs. Yet, we are in an overload shock situation as we are unable to adequately explain why scholastic achievement test scores are dropping and why the national assessment scores are dropping for the seventeen-year-old cohort.

We continue to grope for solutions to recurring problems of school absenteeism, violence, and apparent lack of basic skills attainment. Incidents of student discipline breakdown on campuses and in classrooms are too frequently reported in the press. Teachers seem to be a beleaguered, if not endangered, species, enrolling in courses on relieving stress and teacher burnout. A wave of minimum competency mandates have swept through our state legislatures. Accountability for mastery is demanded. These great concerns in public education are a reflection of a national malaise.

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Our citizens are staggered by the twin economic problems of inflation and high unemployment. We are embarrassed by the falling productivity of our once industrial giant. We have seen the industrial power of once-fallen nations, Japan and Germany, become the world-wide standard. Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have pre-empted former American markets with high-technology, quality goods. American firms have moved plants south of the border to remain competitive. National leaders have called for the "reindustrialization" of the United States.

Our nation has become energy-dependent. This has happened in a country that prospered with seemingly unending petroleum resources in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas, and California. This has happened in a nation that built the engineering marvels of the Grand Coulee Dam, Hoover Dam, and Tennessee Valley Authority. This has happened in a nation that appears to have unending coal resources. We have swelled with national pride in our accomplishment of having Americans on the moon; we are bewildered as to why our technology has not economically harnessed such resources as solar, tidal, wind, and geothermal energy. We see ourselves importing energy at a cost of 80 billion dollars per year.

We see more of our citizens receiving welfare benefits from the state. We are generous in our support of the aged, the infirm, the handicapped, and to the children in homes with inadequate means. Most of these programs have wide-spread citizen support. However, the American public is aroused over welfare programs that seem to make it more profitable for someone not to work than to work. The public seems to support vocational training programs to help people become self-sufficient, but becomes incensed over training programs that seem to have no end or accountability. We want to have a healthy America, but citizens are indignant over what appears to be unlimited care for the indigent while the middle-class taxpayer is squeezed by spiraling medical and hospital costs.

We find Presidential candidates being acclaimed for their promises to trim the bureaucracy and, after being elected, be seemingly impotent to do anything about it. It is understandable that the American public is losing confidence in education. Education is the chief instrument that a state has to structure and focus its direction and efforts. In most states, education is the largest bureaucratic enterprise, the largest single item in the state budget. Education has the largest number of professional employees in government. Of course, education has to assume a share of the blame.

We have tried to do too much for people. We have tried to do too much <u>to</u> people. We have failed to understand a basic

concept in human growth and responsibility: You cannot help someone who does not have the opportunity to help you back. Our foreign aid program signals clear evidence to this concept. Massive grants from a rich, highly developed nation to a dependent, emerging nation are seldom effective. When we provide things that we "know are right," we encounter failure. Gifts from a benevolent giant evoke resentment as much as gratitude. Many times our gifts have been diverted from the priority needs of the people to special projects and comforts of the rulers.

We wonder how it happens when nations whom we have endowed with tens of millions of dollars appear to reject American society, culture, and people. We failed to consider the words of the ancient Greek philosophers who noted that man becomes ashamed to have a service not reciprocated done to him. To bestow a favor upon another evokes a feeling of pride. To receive an unreciprocated favor from another evokes a feeling of subordination.

We have seen some exceptions. There are examples of training programs resulting in turnkey operations that seem to work. We see that humanitarian responses in emergency situations are marked with genuine appreciation. We have been slow to recognize the truth in the silk-screened wall hanging that appears in so many offices:

> Give a man a fish and he will be free from hunger for a week.
> Teach a man to fish and he will be free from hunger forever.

There is a message in that for educators. Our true success resides in a demonstration of competence, in the application of learning, in the creative responses, in the manifested ability of the learner to teach another. We must strive to help them stand alone so successfully that they will be able to reach out and pull a friend along.

We must honor, positively reinforce, examples of the traditional work ethic. We need to find ways to demonstrate that the striving for material goods is not our chief purpose. We must overcome the rampant "look out for old No. 1" philosophy. We need to counter-attack against the me-oriented generation. We can all see examples regarding the selfishness of people and the failure of handouts. Just compare the care and appearance of a federal housing project to a privately-financed condominium development in your community. Recently in our community, the Stockton City Council has been debating whether or not to rehabilitate a government-owned housing project that has deteriorated into an environment of decay, litter, crime, and abuse. Newspaper stories quoted residents who had given up gardening, fixing, and painting because of the general milieu of neglect and irresponsibility. People need to feel pride in acquiring possessions

through their toil. When everything belongs to a remote government, to "them," nobody seems to take care of anything. Observe how people on welfare are not too eager to serve in low paying jobs; many would rather sit home for approximately the same amount of welfare money. Trade unions freely admit that their drive is to secure more salary for fewer hours of work. This emphasis restricts productivity and quality often drops, too. Many high school students, especially seniors, are refraining from enrolling in challenging mathematics, science, and foreign language classes, taking reduced loads, in order to be able to "kick back" and pleasure themselves.

Seeking instant gratification is more often the rule. Deferred gratification is a mature trait; our society seems to be becoming less mature. Civilization runs in cycles. Materialism and dependence will eventually shift to service and independence. We, in the schools, can take action to accelerate the cycling process. We should establish a service component in high school graduation requirements. Students should be required to render service in their community. The equivalent of a year's high school course would be appropriate. Students could select serving as a teacher aide, tutor, nurse's assistant, recreation worker, or senior-citizen home attendant. Students could serve in community agencies, such as United Way, Chamber of Commerce, and YMCA. Students could participate in community beautification projects and anti-litter campaigns. Students would acquire beneficial experience as well as feeling true citizenship by contributing to community operation and betterment.

The idea of service cannot start too early. We can begin in kindergarten and first grade with classroom "helping hands" responsibilities, responsibility for clean-up, and observance of safety and courtesy standards.

Students at all grade levels can be utilized in tutoring other students. This has proven successful with able students, remedial students, special education students, and special interest students. Teaching a skill or concept to another requires analysis and organization, usually enhancing the working knowledge of the tutor. Helping another learn nourishes our feelings of adequacy. Our self-concept soars as we feel adequate, accomplished, contributory, essential. Our potential expands, our productivity increased, our health and happiness are enhanced.

We can assign students to be official hosts for the school, greeting visitors and showing them around the campus. The

hosts can receive training, maybe even special badges or uniforms. New students to the school can be assigned a "school brother" or "school sister" to explain school routines, introduce them to new friends, allay their fears. We can train students to become peer counselors, assisting in a resolution of conflict situations.

Let us offer students the opportunity to entertain the elderly, the young, the infirm. Music and drama groups can go out into the community bringing enrichment and job.

Students can invest their artistic talents in school beautification. They can create murals, develop environmental centers, and make furniture and equipment for their school. Students can also do such simple tasks as weeding flower beds, cleaning up the grounds, and painting school walls. Somewhere schools have picked up the idea that it is improper to ask students to contribute to the maintenance of their school. It may be wrong to require it, but it would be wrong not to encourage such action. Students should be involved in establishing and maintaining classroom environment, including temporary displays that go with units of work and more permanent displays of Hall of Fame portraits and class history collages.

Our students can participate in many helping projects, charity drives. Sometimes, we look upon these activities as an imposition in the learning day. Instead, we should see them as an opportunity for students to learn how they can help others, make an impact for mankind. Collecting money for muscular distrophy, having read-a-thons for multiple sclerosis, collecting paper for recycling, and other projects can promote the feeling of satisfaction from service if the students see how their commitment and investment helps anoother.

We need to recognize accomplishment in serving others. We should have awards for service, as we do for scholastic achievement, excellence in music, championships in athletics. We can provide recognition paraphernalia, such as badges, hats, and windbreakers which can be worn with pride. We should have a "service to school and community" component in the elementary school report card.

Teachers and parents can work together in helping students understand that homework assignments extend their learning, enlarging capacity for growth and service. We can make assignments where students would observe and interview adults engaged in service to the community. We can study how scout groups do good deeds and render service to individuals and the community. We see service clubs, such as Rotary, Lions,

and Kiwanis, develop parks, provide eyeglasses to the needy, help crippled children, provide scholarships, and contribute to youth activities. We can study how religious groups have sent out people in medical service units to improve health in underdeveloped areas. We can study the lives of Jane Addams, Margaret Sanger, Albert Schweitzer, and Father Flanagan.

We should infuse the concepts of work, responsibilities, and render greater service. Human beings are creatures of habit. Why not practice and reinforce the joys of service.

We need to make it more enjoyable to grow than to atrophy. We want our students to feel better after helping another than after receiving a favor. We want students to feel pride in doing their best rather than being satisfied with just getting by.

Yes, there is an essential place for the learning of "manners and morals" in the public schools. That does not mean we give up any freedom or the right to "do our own thing." It does mean, however, that we have to earn the right of freedom, qualify for individual choice.

In the creed of (one of our) major service organizations, the Jaycees, the final sentence reads: "Service to Humanity is the Best Work of LIfe." Service should be a top priority goal for the public schools in the 80's. Will a service-oriented educational experience make the necessary course corrections in our national spirit, direction, ethics, and production? Can we have a new "manifest destiny" of a citizenry committed to industry, creativity, productivity, and concern for each other. If we can, education is a good place to start.

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